

ANTHRAX FROM SHAVING BRUSHES

THE DANGER from shaving brushes infected with anthrax spores has once more been painfully called to our attention by the sad death of Professor Ellermann of the University of Copenhagen. On December 17, 1924, a small spot appeared on his left cheek. It was soon followed by considerable edema, but without marked general symptoms. An examination of his shaving brush showed that it was dyed Chinese horsehair, made to imitate badger, and from the hair anthrax was isolated. The diagnosis was clear, and in spite of the injection of anthrax serum, Professor Ellermann died on December 24.

The experience of the American army is still fresh in the mind of everyone. During the war shaving brushes supplied by the Quartermaster's Department of the army were found to be infected with anthrax spores. So many cases occurred both in the army and in civilian life that certain cities and states forbade the sale or handling of horsehair shaving brushes, especially those made in Japan. In the army there were 149 cases with 22 deaths, all of which were believed to be due to shaving brushes.

In England the first case of anthrax traced to a shaving brush occurred in 1915. From 1915 to 1921 in the civilian population 50 cases occurred with 18 deaths. Among the British troops in France between January, 1915, and February, 1917, 28 cases occurred, and in the navy six cases somewhat later than this. It was not possible to demonstrate that the infection in all of these cases came from shaving brushes, but since the majority of them were on some part of the face and neck, the indications were that shaving brushes could be fairly incriminated. So strong were the indications that the government prohibited the importation of shaving brushes manufactured in Japan. A large number of suspected shaving brushes were destroyed, and the infection was brought to an end.

This new case, with the history of those which have already been published, indicates a source of danger against which we should constantly be on our guard.

WILLIAM HENRY WELCH

THIS JOURNAL, representing the membership of the American Public Health Association, extends to Dr. Welch its most hearty congratulations on his 75th birthday, April 8, 1925, and wishes for him a long period of health and happiness for the future!

Dr. Welch has long been recognized as the Father of Pathology in the United States, and was one of the first to take up bacteriology in this country. As early as 1878, he was demonstrating the fundamentals of bacteriology at the Bellevue Hospital Medical College, in New York, in which institution he held the chair of Pathology from 1879-1884, when he moved to Johns Hopkins University, where he was professor of Pathology until 1916, in which year he became Director of the School of Public Health at the same institution. From 1893 to 1898 he was Dean of the Medical Faculty at Johns Hopkins. Bacteriology has

always been an important branch under Dr. Welch's guidance, and it is not strange to see that he early developed a great interest in public health, which has constantly grown and which had its culmination in the foundation of the school of which he is now director.

He was one of the first to see the importance of the anti-tuberculosis movement in the United States, was active in the formation of the National Tuberculosis Association, of which he is a past president. Dr. Welch has been connected with the Rockefeller Institute of New York and the International Health Board since their foundation, and it is hardly too much to say that his influence has been a determining factor in the donations of Mr. Rockefeller to the advancement of public health and medical education.

Dr. Welch has had the great experience of living through that period of the world's his-